

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) has cosponsored legislation to provide tax relief to Florida Veterans. The "Veterans Travel Tax Relief Act" (H.R. 5737) would allow tax deductions for qualified veterans who travel long distances to receive VA health care.

"We can offer the best health care in the world, but it is of little good if you can't afford to access it," said Buchanan. "One of the most pressing issues for veterans is the cost of travel to VA Medical Centers for treatment. This bill would help ease that burden by helping veterans recover costs the costs of travel for their health care needs."

The travel tax relief bill would allow veterans with an annual income of less than \$75,000 --or \$150,000 for a family-- to receive up to \$400 in tax deductions for fuel, food, and lodging when traveling 25 miles to the nearest VA medical center to receive treatment of their service connected disability.

"I represent 97,000 veterans," added Buchanan. "Many of them travel to Bay Pines for their health care. I'm concerned about the cost to veterans who must travel these long distances for treatment. This bill would make it more affordable for them to get the health care they have earned."

Last year, Buchanan helped increase the mileage reimbursement rate for eligible veterans from 11 cents per mile to 28.5 cents per mile for travel to VA medical facilities. He is continuing his efforts to increase the reimbursement rate to 48.5 cents per mile and remove the deductible. Furthermore the Congressman is working to establish an ambulatory surgery and specialty care clinic in the district to provide comprehensive care to veterans who currently have to travel to Bay Pines.

Buchanan is a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.